Oppose the Health and Care Bill 2021

A model motion for trade unions

Oppose the Health and Care Bill 2021

Motion by: [Name of Union Branch / Region / Body]

Date proposed: [Date]

**This [branch / region / body] notes:**

* While attention is focused on Covid, the NHS in England is being rapidly reorganised into regional Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). This will strengthen the role of private companies, including US health insurance corporations and suppliers, in clinical services and management of the NHS. ICSs will mean more private contracts, more down-skilling and outsourcing of NHS jobs, reduced services and significant spending cuts.
* The Health and Care Bill will turn ICSs into legal bodies. The Bill is based on NHS England proposals, derived from a US model which aims to spend less on care.
* The Bill will remove the statutory duties to provide NHS hospital care in each area, and emergency care for everyone present in an area, and will end the requirement for social care needs assessments before a patient is discharged.
* The Bill allows the Secretary of State to deregulate unspecified NHS roles currently covered by professional regulation, threatening patient safety and staff development and training.
* NHS England Guidance proposes agile and flexible working with staff deployed at different sites and organisations across and beyond the system.
* NHS England has accredited over 200 corporations and businesses, at least 30 US-owned, to help develop ICSs.
* The Bill allows private companies to sit on both tiers of the ICS Board and their committees with delegated powers: a planning and budget-holding Integrated Care Board (ICB) including representation from a local authority and open to unspecified others, and an Integrated Care Partnership including local authorities, social care providers and unspecified others.
* The ICB will sideline local authorities, threatening the future integrity of social care and reducing local accountability to elected Councillors, let alone patients and NHS staff.
* NHS providers will be bound to a plan written by the ICB and to financial controls linked to that plan. The annual budgets will be based on area-wide targets, rather than providing the care needed by the individuals who live there.
* NHS funding will be delivered through a fixed block payment whose value is determined locally, based on a Payment Scheme in which prices for the same treatment or service vary by area, and according to who is providing it and who is receiving it. The private sector will be consulted on the Scheme.
* Such local funding levels could threaten national agreements on wages, terms and conditions. Local pay could lead staff to leave areas where funding is cut, further reducing care.
* Procurement will be streamlined, eliminating safeguards for compliance with environmental, social and labour laws and the ability to reject bidders with poor track records.

**This branch believes:**

* Integrated Care Systems threaten patient care, jobs, pay, working conditions and the integrity of the NHS as a public service. We oppose them.
* After 30 years of marketisation, it is time to restore the NHS to a fully accountable, publicly run service, free to all at the point of use. As unanimously adopted at Labour Party Conference in 2017, full scale repeal of the 2012 Health & Social Care Act and new legislation for a universal, comprehensive and publicly provided NHS are required.
* We need a separate, collaborative, publicly funded Social Care Service.
* Genuine integration based on the wider determinants of health, involves more input from local authorities not less.
* New technology must be used to improve patient care, not to deskill or replace or performance manage staff, or to deprive patients of face-to-face interaction with clinicians and other care staff that they may want or need.

**This branch resolves:**

* To immediately report these threats to the NHS and social care, to appropriate Union structures and to find out what action the Union is taking.
* To press the Union to take urgent action, including using its influence with other unions, the Government and opposition parties, based on the following demands:
* Full opposition to the Health and Care Bill 2021
* Halt the rollout of ICSs
* An extended and meaningful consultation with the public and Parliament to decide how health and social care services are provided in England.
* The introduction of legislation to bring about a universal, comprehensive and publicly provided NHS, free at the point of use and fit for the 21st century.